

Volunteer Handbook

Maricopa County Animal Care & Control



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Welcome

Welcome to Maricopa County Animal Care and Control (MCACC) and thank you for considering volunteering with us! Being a volunteer can be extremely rewarding, educational, exciting and fun. You can have a positive impact in so many ways and make a difference in the lives of thousands of animals in Maricopa County.

We have produced this handbook to help create the best possible experience for MCACC volunteers. It contains critical information about MCACC, our volunteer program, policies and procedures, and so much more. Please carefully read this handbook and refer to it often.

Keep in Mind

While there are many different aspects and assignments you can choose to participate in when volunteering with MCACC, such as in-shelter support, off-site event support, and fostering activities, in this handbook we typically use the term "volunteer" to broadly capture **all** aspects of this program. For instance, you may strictly choose to foster pets. In this instance, some of the content of this handbook (such as scheduling in-shelter shifts) will not apply to your participation. Please direct any questions to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Thank you again for choosing to participate in our program. We know that pet homelessness is a community issue, and it takes a whole community to help address all its complexities.

We hope you will share our commitment to our shelter animals and the community we serve. Your support is what helps keep our programs thriving and brings innovative solutions for all pets in need!



Welcome to your community shelter!



Our History

Maricopa County Animal Care and Control was first established in the early 1950s with the sole purpose of managing stray animals and preventing disease outbreaks in the community. Over the years, the organization has drastically changed its mission and now strives to address the pet overpopulation crisis by offering adoption services, spay/neuter programs, public education and outreach efforts.

Our volunteer program first launched in 1991, and since then we have had thousands of volunteers give their time and talents to help us try to improve, and ultimately save, the lives of the animals that come through our shelter. We are fortunate to have volunteers donating their time whether in shelter or through foster activities and we are constantly looking for ways to expand and improve the program. Each volunteer serves as an ambassador for our organization in the community and we strive to work together to share our knowledge and experiences. Our success depends on the success of our volunteers.

MCACC and Volunteer Program Mission Statements

Our Mission

Working together to serve the animals and people of Maricopa County.

Our Vision

We envision a community in which all pets are part of a family, provided with compassionate care and companionship. We strive to be an innovative and trusted resource for the community.

Our Volunteer Program Mission

To engage and support a dynamic volunteer force that reinforces MCACC's mission to best serve the animals and people of Maricopa County.

Our Volunteer Program Goals

- Maintain a robust and active volunteer force
- Improve retention of active volunteers each year
- Increase volunteer impact (logged hours) every year
- Encourage a positive and supportive environment while making a difference in the lives of the animals in our care

Locations and Hours of Operation

West Valley Animal Care Center

2500 S. 27th Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85009

East Valley Animal Care Center

2630 W. Rio Salado Pkwy, Mesa, AZ 85201

Hours of Operation

Monday – Friday 12PM – 6PM

Saturday – Sunday 12PM – 5PM

To best meet our customer needs, many Alternative Placement and Outreach activities often occur prior to hours of operation. Call our phone numbers listed below or reach us via ACCAltPlacement@maricopa.gov. Hours and locations subject to change on holidays and special circumstances.

Stay Informed

Visit our websites and social media platforms for additional and up-to-date information:

MCACC Phone: 602-506-7387(PETS)

MCACC Website: <https://www.maricopa.gov/pets>

MCACC Volunteer Information Page: <https://www.maricopa.gov/294/Volunteer>

MCACC Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MaricopaCountyAnimalCareandControl>

MCACC Twitter: @MCAnimalCare

MCACC Instagram: @MCAnimalCare

Maricopa County YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZKASNi4Nm27rw3gfUIjEKA>



General Guidelines and Best Practices

Each of the guidelines and best practices listed below is supported by a Maricopa County or MCACC department policy. For more information on County or department policies, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Definition of a Volunteer

At MCACC, a volunteer is an individual who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, willingly gives time to complete a task at the direction of, and on behalf of, MCACC either while on the shelter premises, at a shelter sponsored event or through animal fostering activities. A description of our Volunteer Opportunities and Volunteer Classifications are set forth later in this Handbook.



Volunteer Housekeeping Basics

Below is a collection of important policies and processes that apply to all MCACC volunteers.

Activities and Events

MCACC schedules and plans activities and events (both on-site and off-site) for adoptions, awareness, and other outreach initiatives. All activities and events, either on the MCACC premises or as represented as MCACC in the public, must be coordinated and approved by MCACC management. Unscheduled or impromptu activities or events will not be supported or endorsed by MCACC. For more information, visit: <https://www.maricopa.gov/5394/Group-Events>.

Adopting a Shelter Pet

Volunteers may (and are encouraged to) adopt from the shelter just as the public (with no expectation of reduced fees or privileges). Adoption is contingent upon the volunteer meeting the adoption guidelines and payment of all applicable fees.

Age Restrictions

Volunteers in our volunteer program must be 15 years of age or older.

Volunteers under 18 years of age must always be accompanied by a parent or guardian who has attended volunteer orientation and any required training relevant to the volunteer assignment the minor is completing. Minors may be restricted from performing certain volunteer services, including holding leashes, handling animals, and fostering animals for their safety and the safety of the animals in our care.

Alcohol & Drug Free Workplace

Volunteers are one of MCACC's most valuable resources, and, for that reason, your health and safety is of paramount concern; MCACC is committed to safeguarding the health and safety of all volunteers. The use or abuse of alcohol, drugs, or other controlled substances affects the safety of

everyone present at MCACC. MCACC strictly forbids any alcohol or drug use, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, on MCACC property during volunteer hours. MCACC also does not allow any abuse of prescription or over-the-counter medication on MCACC property during volunteer hours.



County Property

The equipment and facilities of MCACC are to be used only for the benefit of MCACC. Personal use of MCACC equipment is not allowed. Employees and volunteers are expected to exercise appropriate care for furniture, supplies, and equipment at MCACC.

In the event of damage, theft, or sabotage to property of MCACC, its animals, or any employee or volunteer, MCACC reserves the right to ask you to assist and cooperate in necessary investigations. In addition,

MCACC reserves the right to conduct routine inspections of all areas on MCACC's premises, including lockers. Personal belongings located on the property of MCACC may be subject to search.

You may not use County or MCACC insignias, logos, photographs, or any other County intellectual property ("County Intellectual Property") without the express, written consent of the County. In no event shall you use County Intellectual Property in a way that misrepresents or causes confusion as to the source of the use or in a manner that passes yourself off as part of the County or MCACC organization. Upon discovery of such use, MCACC will ask that you cease such use immediately. Failure to do so may result in ending your volunteer agreement and any further action necessary to stop the infringing use of County Intellectual Property.

This policy extends to all items received through in-kind donations from volunteers and members of the public, which are considered MCACC property upon donation.

Donations

MCACC is extremely grateful for the generous support of our volunteers and community members to provide much-needed items for our organization. However, storage space in the shelter is limited and not all items donated can be used. Before soliciting or accepting donations on behalf of MCACC, volunteers must confirm those items are needed and receive approval from a shelter supervisor or manager.

Employment Opportunities

As a volunteer of MCACC, you are welcome to apply for vacant staff positions and reference your volunteer experience in your application. Job openings are posted on the Maricopa County website (<https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/maricopa>). If you are interested in a posted vacancy, you must apply for the position as detailed in the position announcement.

Euthanasia

As a municipal organization, MCACC is tasked with protecting the health and safety of the people, pets, and animals in our community. MCACC considers euthanasia to be the last resort and attempts, when safe, to find an appropriate home or approved animal welfare organization for each of the 20,000 cats and dogs that come through our doors each year. Thanks to many life-saving programs, MCACC typically saves 95% of the animals that enter our shelter annually.

As a volunteer, you may be exposed to animals facing euthanasia, even though you will never have to witness it. Whether or not you personally agree with the practice, this is a day-to-day reality at the shelter. Despite your personal viewpoint, please be considerate – our employees do their best to cope with the administration of euthanasia and its after-effects daily.

Good Housekeeping

MCACC is proud of the cleanliness of our facilities. Please help preserve our standard of good housekeeping by maintaining all work areas in a clean and orderly manner. If there is an area of concern, please direct the concern to the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of management for appropriate follow-up.

Open Door Policy

MCACC believes in an open-door communication policy. You are encouraged to bring your volunteer-, policy-, or procedure-related issues or concerns to the attention of your Volunteer Coordinator or a member of MCACC management at any time.

Parking

MCACC is not liable for theft or damage to your personal vehicle while you are volunteering or visiting the shelter. We advise you to keep your doors locked and bring all valuable items with you or leave them at home.

Family & Friends on MCACC Campus

Family, including minor children, and friends of volunteers are not allowed beyond MCACC areas of public access and should not attend volunteer hours unless they are a volunteer themselves.

Personal Pets on MCACC Campus

MCACC does not allow volunteers to bring personally owned animals onto MCACC campus while volunteering. Unless returning them, foster pets are included in this restriction.

Tobacco on MCACC Campus

All Maricopa County facilities are tobacco-free properties. Use of tobacco products (including smokeless tobacco, e-cigarettes, tobacco vapors, etc.) is not permitted in any County building including MCACC. Smoking is not allowed on-property nor within 20 feet of entrances/exits to buildings.

Volunteer Hours

Regular in-shelter volunteer hours are seasonal to best support a broad range of activities. The Volunteer Coordinator will alert you to changes in hours. Volunteers are asked to be out of the wings and areas with dog kennels by 15 minutes before the stated closing time to allow staff to secure the facility for the evening. Holidays and special events may affect these hours and notice will be given ahead of time. Volunteer and foster schedules and events are typically managed using software called Volgistics. You'll learn how to use this software as you're trained.

Volunteer Safety

Safety is of the utmost importance at MCACC. Please read the following guidelines to know how and where to report and/or respond to safety issues or concerns. The animals in our care depend on all of us – please report to shelter staff immediately any observations of concern, such as signs of illness or untreated wounds, or behavioral issues, so they may be addressed.



Animal Bites

Per state law, whenever an animal tooth breaks skin, it is considered a bite. You are required to report all bites, regardless of how minor the injury. Failure to report a bite, whether the bite happened to you or you witnessed the bite, could result in the ending of your volunteer agreement.

If you witness or sustain a bite, first address any first aid needs, including cleaning the bite wound thoroughly, or if necessary, calling for emergency medical assistance (e.g. Occupational Health Clinic/Emergency Room). Then immediately report the bite to the Volunteer Coordinator or another supervisor. You will be required to complete an incident report with your contact information and all details surrounding the bite, including what activity you (or the person you witnessed) were doing with the animal and the animal's body language immediately before the bite occurred. Depending on the severity or circumstances of the bite, the Volunteer Coordinator or Shelter Manager may choose to send the volunteer(s) home for the day.

Animal bites are taken seriously and occur for many reasons. Bites do not necessarily reflect poorly on an animal's behavior or definitively direct an animal's outcome. Every bite circumstance and severity is reviewed individually and outcome decisions are made by committee. Having all the relevant information allows MCACC to be better prepared to address the situation in the best interest of the animal and our community.



Fire & Emergencies

Familiarize yourself with the location of fire evacuation routes to use to leave your work area in the event of fire or emergency. Please make every effort to guard against fire hazards. In the event of an emergency elsewhere in the facility, you will receive directions on what to do (evacuate, lock-down, etc.).

Inclement Weather

Great value is placed on punctuality and reliability, but in the event of inclement weather, MCACC does not expect volunteers to report for their shift when doing so endangers their personal safety. Please remember to contact the Volunteer Coordinator and/or remove yourself from the schedule online, if needed.

Other Supporting Programs

MCACC may contract with local Corrections, Work Release and Community Service programs to assist with maintaining shelter facilities. When these individuals are on-site, they may assist with tasks at either shelter including laundry, feeding, or various special projects.

Shelter supervisors are responsible for managing these individuals. Direct any questions to the Volunteer Coordinator.

MCACC Buildings/Security Systems Access

You may be given access to non-public areas of MCACC buildings and security systems for assignments relating to your volunteer position. This access is restricted to your use only and is not to be shared with others without prior authorization. If a volunteer provides any unauthorized person access to any MCACC building or security system, it may result in the ending of their volunteer agreement.

Receiving Area

You must not enter the receiving area when trucks are unloading stray animals. This is for your safety and the safety of our animals. If you are unsure where this area is, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of management. This area is reviewed during the orientation/shelter tours.

Safety

An effective safety program requires the full cooperation of all employees and volunteers. For that reason, employees and volunteers are expected to exercise care for their own safety and that of fellow workers by observing all safety rules. Volunteers may be required to use safety and personal protective equipment (PPE) during volunteer activities including off-site fostering activities.



If you see an unsafe condition, immediately report it to the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of management as soon as possible. If you are ever directed to take an action that you believe to be unsafe, immediately report the incident to the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of management. Questions or comments regarding safety issues should be discussed with the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of management.

Violence Prevention & Weapons

To ensure a safe and healthy workplace and to minimize the opportunity for violence, MCACC has adopted a "zero tolerance" policy toward workplace violence. Any and all acts of intimidation, threats (even if apparently facetious), possession of lethal weapons, or acts of violence will be considered a Serious Infraction. These acts will be referred to legal authorities when appropriate. A threat, threatening behavior, or any other act of aggression by an employee or volunteer while they are on-site or off-site on official MCACC business is a violation of this policy. Volunteers should report any knowledge of a direct, or indirect, threat made toward themselves, another volunteer, an employee, or a visitor. Confidential reports can be made to the Volunteer Coordinator, the Director, or the first available member of management.

If you encounter a member of the public that you suspect is potentially dangerous or hostile:

- Immediately alert the Volunteer Coordinator, a supervisor, or other staff member to the situation
- Do not risk harm to yourself
- You should not take any action that might put yourself or others in danger

MCACC does not allow weapons, including concealed handguns or other weapons (to include knives with blades longer than three inches), to be carried onto its property. Possession of any deadly weapons anywhere on the campus of MCACC is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate termination from the volunteer program.

Workplace Injuries

Every injury, no matter how slight, must be reported immediately to the Volunteer Coordinator or a member of MCACC management. Even seemingly minor injuries can result in serious complications if proper medical attention is not obtained. If you are injured while volunteering with MCACC, including during fostering activities, it is your responsibility to report the accident immediately. You will be required to complete MCACC's incident report.

Zoonotic Disease

Zoonotic diseases are diseases caused by infectious agents that can be transmitted between animals and humans. You should not let this section alarm you, but rather remind you that you are volunteering in a hospital-like environment where these organisms often exist.

The most effective means of preventing zoonosis is to:

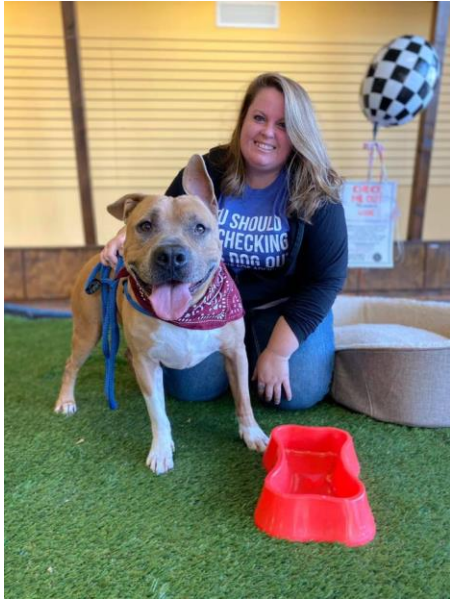
- Wash your hands frequently with antibacterial soap, especially after handling any animal and prior to eating or drinking.
- Wear gloves when cleaning (especially when cleaning up waste and litter).
- Immediately disinfect scratches and bite wounds.
- Let your physician know that you work closely with shelter animals.



Just as you can catch illnesses from dogs and cats, you can also unknowingly carry illnesses home to your pets. The most effective means of preventing the spread of illness to your pets (or from your pets to our shelter animals) are to:

- Make sure that your own pets have all their vaccinations up to date. Let your veterinarian know that you work with shelter animals.
- Change your shelter clothes before socializing with your pets at home, and vice versa.
- Check the soles of your shoes before leaving the shelter to ensure you are not tracking feces into your car and home. Or, even better, designate a pair of shoes to be your "shelter shoes" and take them off before entering your home.





Volunteer Responsibilities

Our volunteers are part of the MCACC team and therefore held to similar standards as our shelter employees. This section provides a brief overview of expectations. For additional detail, please review the separate resources provided to you electronically when you applied to become a volunteer.

Attendance

Absences of volunteers adversely affects our ability to provide a high standard of care for shelter animals. If you cannot report to a **scheduled** shift for any reason, we ask that you notify us at least 24 hours in advance by either removing your scheduled shift online or emailing the Volunteer Coordinator.

If a volunteer repeatedly misses scheduled shifts with no advance communication (as noted above), the individual may be asked to meet with the Volunteer Coordinator. During that discussion, the individual can explain their current situation and reconfirm their level of commitment to MCACC.

Code of Conduct

As a volunteer of MCACC, you are representing Maricopa County any time you interact with people and animals, even outside of your volunteer duties. We ask that you are professional, polite, and courteous when interacting with others. We also ask that you treat all employees and volunteers with respect, dignity, and compassion. Further, treat all animals in a humane and safe manner and report any instances of inhumane conduct to a manager. Do not wear county T-shirts, emblems, or name badges while drinking or engaging in any questionable or illegal activities, both on-site and off-site.

Disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, threats, disparaging remarks, and discriminatory or vulgar language will not be tolerated. This code of conduct applies to online and/or written material as well as personal interactions with staff, other volunteers, and members of the public.

Media Relations

The Public Information Officer is responsible for all media relations for MCACC. This includes disseminating all press releases and handling all press inquiries. Only the Public Information Officer and/or the Director are authorized to give verbal or written public statements on behalf of MCACC.

To that end, if you receive an inquiry from a representative of the media inquiring about MCACC and/or recent events at MCACC, you should promptly refer the inquiry to the Public Information Officer (602-506-3471). Do not contact or speak with the media on behalf of MCACC without express permission from the MCACC Public Information Officer or Director.

Confidential Information

Volunteers are not allowed to share any confidential information they may encounter while volunteering for/at MCACC, unless required by law or approved by the Director. Confidential Information includes personal identifying details (names, phone numbers, addresses, email addresses, etc.) of staff, volunteers, adopters, previous animal owners, and animal rescue organizations including any inclusions on internal reports. Confidential Information may also include an individual's credit card numbers, social security numbers, medical history, family member's information, or other personal characteristics.

Volunteers are expected to exercise care not to disclose Confidential Information unintentionally, by indiscreet conversation, or by careless handling of Confidential Information. Volunteers may not use County property to access Confidential Information for anything other than business needs as identified by MCACC. This prohibits accessing and/or using Confidential Information with the intent to contact or meet individuals, including adopters, rescue partners, staff, volunteers, or members of the public. Any volunteer who purposely, or through failure to exercise reasonable care, causes Confidential Information to be improperly disclosed or used, may be released from the volunteer program.



Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to a situation where a volunteer has competing personal or professional obligations and/or interests that would negatively impact their ability to fulfill their MCACC volunteer duties fairly and ethically. Any suspected conflict of interest, real or perceived, must be reported to the Volunteer Coordinator within 24-48 hours of the conflict being realized or identified. In some instances, this may result in alternate volunteer assignments to avoid the appearance of, or actual, impropriety.

Conflict Resolution

MCACC welcomes and values volunteers and has an open-door policy for volunteers to raise their concerns without fear of reprisal or discrimination. All volunteers are encouraged to contact their Volunteer Coordinator to raise any concerns or questions. When disputes or misunderstandings occur, the circumstances will be reviewed and considered by the Volunteer Coordinator. The

Volunteer Coordinator will often meet with volunteers to work together to find an acceptable solution or an appropriate compromise to the issue. The goal is to have a positive and collaborative environment for staff and volunteers to do their best work.

If a volunteer has a direct conflict with the Volunteer Coordinator or Shelter Manager concerning issues of reprisal, harassment or discrimination, they may contact the Deputy Director at 602-506-5100 or the Director at 602-506-8515.

Corrective Action

MCACC reserves the right to end any relationships between a volunteer and MCACC at any time, with or without notice or explanation. Failure to comply with this Handbook, MCACC guidelines, policies, and procedures may result in removal from the volunteer program. Released volunteers are not permitted entry to MCACC beyond areas of public access.

Although the goal is that with proper training and support, there will never be a need to address inappropriate behavior or conduct, it is important to outline MCACC's corrective action process for volunteers in the event such issues need to be addressed. To accomplish this goal, everyone must hold themselves to certain standards of conduct and behavior. In order to ensure everyone is informed of those standards and possible consequences for inappropriate conduct, the following outline is provided:

Zero Tolerance Actions – Immediate Cancellation of the Volunteer Agreement with MCACC:

- Animal cruelty/abuse, including kicking or hitting an animal
- Insubordination
- Fighting or threats of violence
- Intoxication/under the influence (no drug or alcohol use permitted)
- Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment and/or inappropriate sexual behavior
- Improper use or disclosure of confidential information stored by MCACC
- Theft and/or intentionally damaging property
- Using and/or duplicating building and/or office keys without written authorization
- Failure to immediately (or as soon as possible) report a bite or other injury
- Carrying and/or bringing weapons on to the property
- Unauthorized access to County property (including access outside of volunteer hours)
- Violation of MCACC-provided policies and guidelines

Other issues involving the failure to comply with rules, guidelines and expectations are categorized into two levels: **Minor Infraction** and **Serious Infraction**.

- **A Minor Infraction**, as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator, may result in a documented discussion. Although not an inclusive list, examples may include: not logging volunteer hours, not adhering to the volunteer dress code, excessive “no-shows” for volunteer shifts, correctable mistakes, a simple or reasonable misunderstanding, complaints from the public, staff, or volunteers regarding discourteous, disrespectful, or problematic interactions or communications, etc.

- **A Serious Infraction**, as determined by the Volunteer Coordinator, may result in a documented discussion, a break in service for a period as set by the Volunteer Coordinator or termination of the volunteer agreement with MCACC.
- If a break in service is directed, the volunteer will be advised in writing that if/when the volunteer chooses to return, he/she will contact the Volunteer Coordinator prior to resuming volunteer service.
- Examples of a Serious Infraction that may justify the termination of a volunteer agreement include, but are not limited to: behavior described under the Zero Tolerance Section, endangering the safety of self or others (animals and people), failure to adhere to MCACC guidelines, policies and procedures, efforts to disrupt the operations of MCACC, repeated “minor issues” where attempts to correct the issue or issues have been ineffective.

Dress Code

Volunteers are required to adhere to the following dress code guidelines to allow volunteers to be recognizable and to protect their safety when interacting with our animals. All volunteers will be provided with one (1) complimentary volunteer T-shirt upon completion of their New Volunteer On-Boarding and Training period.

- Volunteers must always wear an approved volunteer T-shirt while representing MCACC, both on-site and off-site.
- All individuals should wear a nametag or have their name clearly and neatly displayed on their shirt.
- Ankle-length (must cover ankles), sturdy pants must be worn to protect your legs. Shorts, skirts, yoga pants, and dresses will not be allowed.
- Closed-toe and closed-back shoes are required for all volunteers, regardless of capacity of your assignment. Shoes should be appropriate for your assignment that day.
- Clothing should be in good condition with no rips or tears.
- Jewelry that might be dangerous or attract the attention of the animals should be covered with a flesh-colored bandage or removed while volunteering with animals.
- Earbuds/Headphones should not be worn while walking or handling animals.

Exceptions: volunteers working in specialized project areas may be allowed alterations in the dress code policy at the approval of the staff member in charge of the program. For example, volunteers in our veterinary clinic may be approved to wear scrubs.

Please see the Volunteer Coordinator with any dress code questions. Dress code violations may result in the volunteer being asked to leave. Repeat dress code violations may result in the ending of the volunteer agreement.

Keys

Some volunteers will be issued key(s) for the shelter at which they are volunteering and must take care not to lose them. If you must end your volunteer obligations, you will be expected to return your key to the Volunteer Coordinator. Our security, as well as the safety of the animals and the public, is of the utmost importance.

Maintaining Active Volunteer Status

Excluding foster activities, active volunteers are those who volunteer a minimum of 8 hours per month tracked through the Volgistics system.

If a volunteer is unable to regularly meet the minimum hour requirements every month, the individual may be asked to meet with the Volunteer Coordinator to determine the extent of their commitment to MCACC.

Resignation Procedure

Upon leaving the MCACC volunteer program, for whatever reason, please inform the Volunteer Coordinator and return your key(s) and any other county items you have received while volunteering. This notification enables us to keep our records up to date and further improve the volunteer program.



If 60 days pass without any logged volunteer hours, MCACC will assume you have resigned your volunteer position. You will be contacted and asked to return your shelter keys (as appropriate) and any other county items that have been issued to you as a volunteer.

Reinstatement Process

Volunteers interested in returning to the program after their record has become inactive will follow one of the following processes depending on the length of absence. Individuals who have not volunteered for more than six months will need to submit a new volunteer application, attend orientation, and complete all required training.

If the individual wishes to return to volunteering within six months of their last date of volunteer service, they must meet with the Volunteer Coordinator prior to resuming their volunteer responsibilities. Upon approval from the Volunteer Coordinator, inactive volunteers may be reinstated within six months of their last date of service without submitting a new volunteer application. However, additional trainings may be required. Requests for reinstatement may be declined depending on the circumstances of the volunteer's absence and/or the needs of MCACC.

Responding to Questions or Requests for Unauthorized Tasks

When volunteering, you will receive many questions from the public. Each volunteer is at a different level of training and skill. To prevent giving out misinformation or completing a task improperly, please direct the public to a staff member if you are unable or unsure as to how to help them. Doing something for which you have not been trained risks doing a task improperly or getting injured. An example of a response to a question or task you are unfamiliar with: *"I'm not sure, but let me find someone who can help you,"* and then introduce them to a staff member who can assist. As a volunteer, you are not allowed to give medical or legal advice to the public.

Scheduling Shifts

All volunteers are required to schedule themselves for shifts at the shelter by utilizing our online volunteer portal in Volgistics. Scheduling your shifts ahead of time allows MCACC to adequately manage staff and volunteer resources. If a specific shift or assignment is full, please respect the other volunteers' time and opt for a different assignment or date that has availability.

Separation from the Volunteer Program

MCACC reserves the right to end any relationships between a volunteer and MCACC with or without notice or explanation. Released volunteers are not permitted entry to MCACC beyond areas of public access. Failure to comply with MCACC guidelines, policies, and procedures may result in removal from the volunteer program.



MCACC has an obligation to the animals in our care, to the staff, the general public, and our community to uphold the highest standards and integrity regarding our operations and animal care. Any behavior that is detrimental to that integrity, such as, but not limited to: the mistreatment of animals, alcohol or drug abuse, insubordination, misrepresentation of MCACC and other animal welfare organizations to customers, misconduct, property theft, failure to adhere to policies and procedures, ill-treatment of staff, volunteers or customers, and improper usage of equipment, may conclude in separation of a volunteer position held at MCACC.

Social Media

MCACC volunteers are encouraged to use social media to share their volunteer experience, including our adoptable animals. Before posting about MCACC online, be sure that you are not revealing any Confidential Information (see above). Any personal comments made on private or public pages should be clearly identified as personal comments, using a phrase such as *"This is my personal opinion and does not necessarily represent the views of MCACC."*

When sharing adoptable animals on social media sites, please include the animal's ID number (A Number) to increase the likelihood of an adoption. By turning the animal ID number into a searchable hashtag, individuals will be able to locate other public posts related to that animal. To create a searchable hashtag, simply put "#" before the "A" number, for example: #A1234567.

Please refer to the separate MCACC Volunteer Social Media Policy for additional guidelines and information.

Tracking Your Volunteer Hours

All volunteers are required to sign-in and sign-out at the beginning and end of every volunteer shift. This will allow you to accurately record your volunteer contributions (which may be used for appropriate tax, scholarship, or career purposes) and will allow MCACC to account for you in the event of a fire or other emergency. By tracking your hours, you are also allowing MCACC to understand the impact of volunteer time and the importance of certain programs. This information may also allow MCACC to receive specialized grant funding or other donations for further expansion of services. Again, this excludes fostering activities.

In-shelter Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers are involved in every aspect of our organization. Whatever your interests or skill sets, chances are we have an opportunity that will appeal to you! Below are some of our key roles. For a comprehensive list of current volunteer opportunities and responsibilities, please visit our [Opportunity Directory](#).

Helping our Dogs

Volunteers working with our dogs may be involved in the following areas:

- Dog Walking
- In-Kennel Enrichment
- Kennel Cleaning
- Laundry
- Pet Photography
- And more!

Helping our Cats

Many of our volunteers love to spend time with our feline friends! All of our cats are housed at the West Shelter. Volunteers assisting with our cats may be involved in the following areas:

- Socialization
- In-Kennel Enrichment
- Kennel Cleaning
- Laundry
- Pet Photography
- And more!



Adoption Counseling

We strive to find adoptive homes for our shelter pets. Adoption counselors work with families to find great matches to fit their lifestyle and needs. This is a rewarding experience and we always need assistance!

Shelter Medicine

We are fortunate to have full-time vet staff every day! Volunteers help our veterinarians and techs increase their capacity for care in many of the following ways.

- Kennel Cleaning
- Basic Grooming
- Surgical Prep
- Sterilizing Instruments
- Administering Treatment
- And more!

Fostering

We have a fantastic foster program and almost every volunteer is automatically eligible. Please consider opening your heart and home to temporarily care for animals in need. From bottle babies to seniors, we have someone for everyone. We most often need the most assistance with large dogs (over 30 pounds). While each individual has different needs, MCACC has 3 different fostering categories: Day fostering, Medical Fostering and Overnight Fostering.

Other Opportunities

We have a wide variety of programs in the shelter that allow us to increase our capacity for care and help more and more of our community members every day. We have volunteers that help worried families find their missing pet (Lost and Found) and others who work in the community to provide much-needed services (Pet Help). We also have volunteers who help with other day-to-day operations like marketing, development, fundraising, data entry, database management, inventory, and more!

In-shelter Volunteer Classifications

There are three levels of in-shelter volunteer service based on the various stages of experience, training, and interests of our volunteers. All newly enrolled volunteers will begin at the first level and, if interested, may work towards reaching the other classifications over time.

Shelter Apprentice – Complete orientation and initial trainings, including Chameleon database training and Fear Free training. Volunteers must complete a minimum of 16 hours of volunteer service in low-contact areas before registering for Dog Walking training. Examples of Shelter Apprentice volunteer roles are:

- Surgical Preparation
- Kennel Cleaning
- Laundry
- Lost and Found
- Lobby Greeter
- In-Kennel Enrichment
- Data Assistant
- And more!

Shelter Champion – Upon successful completion of Apprentice-level requirements and approval from the Volunteer Coordinator, a volunteer may choose to pursue Shelter Champion classification. This level is for experienced volunteers; there will be direct involvement with more shelter animals and higher levels of access and responsibility. Examples of Shelter Champion volunteer roles are:

- Adoption Counseling
- Dog Walking
- Administering Treatments
- Advanced Chameleon Use
- Cat Socialization
- And more!

Shelter Mentor – Upon successful completion of Champion-level requirements and approval from the Volunteer Coordinator, a volunteer may choose to pursue Shelter Mentor classification. This level is for Mentor volunteers; they are the subject matter experts of our volunteer program and help facilitate coordination amongst all involved in the shelter experience. Our Shelter Mentors serve in one or several areas to assist with the training and development of volunteer roles and may serve in any and all roles in the volunteer program.



[Click here](#) for a list of current volunteer opportunities.

Frequently Asked Questions

These are just a few of the key questions asked by volunteers and members of the public when they visit our shelter. Please visit our website for more details.



Q: What does the adoption fee include?

A: Adoption fees include: the spay or neuter surgery, rabies vaccine, booster vaccines, 1-year license for dogs older than three months plus a free starter bag of Hill's Science Diet. Microchips are also included thanks to generous community sponsors. **Please do not quote fees to any potential adopters as they change to best support shelter needs.**

Q: Who names the dogs?

A: Many shelter animals come into the shelter without tags, collars or microchips, which means we often do not know what their previous names were. Once the stray hold ends, staff and volunteers give the dogs and cats names to have while they are in the shelter.

Q: What is Rabies Quarantine or Bite Quarantine?

A: This is a medical quarantine, required by law, resulting from a situation in which an animal has broken skin on a person creating a possible rabies exposure situation. Per state law, these animals must be held for a minimum of 10 days to observe for clinical signs of rabies. After a bite quarantine hold, each animal is evaluated to determine its potential risk to the health and safety of the community.

Q: Do I still have to go through foster training if I am already an onsite volunteer?

A: Yes, but we keep it as simple as possible for safe, successful matches!

Q: Where can I find contact information for shelter staff?

A: Always contact the Volunteer Coordinator with questions or concerns first. They'll provide the correct next steps and contact information.

What is Fostering?

As an MCACC volunteer, if you choose to do so, you are automatically eligible to foster. All you need is a little extra training and information. Interested? Great, get started by reading the rest of this section!

An MCACC Foster is...

...an individual who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, willingly assumes the care of MCACC shelter animal(s) for an approved period of time with the ultimate intention of a positive permanent outcome (adoption or transfer to an approved facility).

Fostering is...

...sharing your day or your home with an animal that needs special care and personally finding them an adopter, helping a sick animal gain health to be ready for adoption, or caring for underage or underweight animals (with or without their mother) during early stages of life until they are old enough for adoption. Animals in the care of their foster remain the property of MCACC until the completed MCACC adoption packet has been returned. Foster animals must be managed and returned under MCACC guidelines and with approval by MCACC Clinic.

Fostering is not...

...sharing your home with a healthy, highly adoptable animal already suitable for adoption. MCACC typically has great success finding placement for these animals. Healthy, highly adoptable animals spend very little time sheltered, and are often selected prior to availability. These animals encourage the public to visit the shelter and are best maintained by MCACC for speedy, positive outcomes.

...selecting an animal, you may be considering personally for direct adoption or adoption to a friend or family member. While we **do** encourage adoption, we **do not** encourage adoption “test drives” via the MCACC Foster Program. This has an unfortunate negative impact on resources and conflicts with the spirit of the program. If you are considering adoption, please adopt and see if it’s a great fit. Then wait a few months while your newly adopted pet adjusts and consider fostering once you’ve given time to bond with your newest family member.

Fostering within the Community

Pet homelessness is a community issue that requires collaborative community resolution. MCACC proudly partners with hundreds of like-minded and dedicated individuals and organizations with the goal of ensuring safe, responsible, positive pet ownership. We encourage fostering activities as part of this collaborative effort. If you decide you’d like to foster animals for other organizations while also being an active foster with MCACC, we encourage you to do so. Please also ensure that you share this information with MCACC employees who support fostering activities to ensure all program expectations can be safely met.

Saving lives through fostering can be bittersweet and is not for everyone. Not all MCACC animals will be approved for foster and foster eligibility can change if a shelter animal’s medical or behavioral status deems it necessary. Fostering is highly rewarding because your direct care saves individual lives. However, the experience can be challenging when despite all efforts, an animal’s health or behavior makes them ineligible or no longer eligible for the outcome a foster envisions.

Hopefully this brief overview has provided you with valuable initial insight. Please continue reading to learn more details about MCACC’s foster opportunities.

Good to Know

Adopting a Shelter Pet

Fosters may (and are encouraged to) adopt from the shelter just as the public (with no expectation of reduced fees or privileges). Adoption is contingent upon the foster meeting the adoption guidelines and payment of all applicable fees. Animals are released “AS IS”. This helps shorten shelter animals’ length of stay and also helps our team focus on critical care and state-mandated services for all sheltered animals. Veterinary staff cannot provide additional services and cannot accept special requests. If an animal is noted by MCACC veterinary staff to require additional diagnostics or services prior to release, it is provided at MCACC veterinarians’ discretion to complete the service or recommend a different course of action.

Age Restrictions

The primary individual responsible for the foster pet in the home must be at least 18 years old. Many of our animals may have restrictions on placement in homes with small children. As a foster, you must be honest and forthcoming with your Foster Coordinator regarding any minors living in or visiting the home to ensure the safety of your family and your foster animal(s).

Foster Hours

While we **always** welcome walk-ins, the Alternative Placement team greatly appreciates appointment-based activities. With an appointment, fosters are permitted in the shelter prior to regular operating hours which allows us to provide a broader list of services to our supporters. It also helps us get everything prepared in advance of your arrival which helps reduce anxiety for the animal(s) you’re assisting. To make an appointment to foster, please send your request via email to ACCFoster@maricopa.gov and you will receive a confirmation for your appointment date and time.

Dress Code

To protect your safety and the safety of our animals, fosters are asked to dress appropriately when coming to the shelter to pick up a foster pet. This includes wearing closed-toe, closed-back shoes and long pants. When out in the community showcasing your foster pet, remember that you are acting as a representative of MCACC. We ask you to please dress modestly and safely, wearing secure comfortable footwear and non-restrictive clothing, and help us model safe animal handling behaviors. Please see an Outreach team member with any dress code questions.

Maintaining Active Foster Status

Active fosters are those who regularly foster animals either as day-, overnight-, or medical-; foster status can also be maintained by keeping active with MCACC communications.

If a foster is unable to regularly meet the requirements, the individual may be asked to meet with a member of the Outreach team to determine the extent of their commitment to fostering with MCACC.

If six (6) months pass without taking a foster pet from MCACC your foster status will be changed to inactive and the Outreach team will assume you have resigned your foster position. You may be contacted and asked to return to the shelter any items that have been issued to you as a foster.



Foster Opportunities

As a foster, you may have the opportunity to bring cats and dogs of all ages and sizes into your home. The availability of foster pets directly depends on MCACC intake each day. Below are the different types of opportunities that may be available. Eligible foster opportunities can be viewed and selected once you've successfully completed your foster application. Note: New fosters are **limited to one adult foster** at a time from any animal welfare organization.



Day Foster

Think of this as a doggy field trip! Give a dog a break from the shelter for a few hours and go for a hike, out to lunch, or just relax and play at home. For everyone's safety, Day Foster dogs may not be introduced to personal pets and may not go to dog parks or other off-leash areas. If interested in Day Fostering, as a volunteer, your application is already approved. You may sign-up for Day Foster opportunities in Volgistics as they become available.

Overnight Foster

This is what most of us consider traditional fostering. Shelter animals stay with you, in your home, instead of at the shelter. This opportunity typically spans from 2 to 30 days, may include behaviorally or medically challenged animals, and is based on each animal's individual needs. MCACC personnel will call regularly to ensure each foster pairing is a good match for both people and animals. We ask our foster families to market their foster animals and meet with potential adopters while the animal is in the home. Ideally, every foster animal would be adopted prior to the end of the fostering commitment.

Kittens and Puppies

Occasionally, MCACC will receive orphaned, underage kittens or puppies or a pregnant animal who just gave birth. Critical care for these animals typically requires a 4-to-8-week commitment and may require around the clock care and possible trips to an after-hours emergency clinic, depending on their age and medical needs.



Medical Fostering

Animals with medical needs that can be addressed by our shelter veterinarians may require some time to heal in a foster home. Depending on the animal's needs, fosters may be asked to commit a few days up to several months of dedicated care for the animal, including attending follow-up appointments at the shelter. Our most common medical needs include: post-operative care; upper respiratory infections; ringworm, or other parasitic treatments; healing wounds or other injuries; and general post-treatment monitoring.

All foster opportunities are approved through shelter leadership and most are also under the guidance from Clinic veterinarians. The length of a foster opportunity, return of foster animals, and all medical decisions are dictated by shelter management and veterinarians. Many foster opportunities will require additional training for the safety of people and animals.

Due to specific needs, foster animals will be assigned first-come first-served, as long as the responding foster is a good fit for the animal's specific needs.

Preparing for a Foster

Before agreeing to open your house and heart to a foster, ensure your family and your home are ready for the additional commitment. The following items will help you prepare for your foster animal(s).

Pet-Proof Your Home

New animals are very curious and often we don't know how they'll react in a home environment until the actual experience. Set them up for success by limiting access to items like house plants, shoes, loose wires, and open trash cans. Be sure you have a safe and secure way to quarantine the foster animal from your own pets and repair any fencing gaps proactively to prevent escape. MCACC is not responsible for any property damage caused by foster animals while in your home.

Check with Your Veterinarian

To best ensure safety for all animals, your personal pets must be current on their vaccinations before bringing a shelter animal into your home. Your veterinarian is the best resource for preparing your pets. Foster animals may or may not be surgically sterilized when they enter your home. Unaltered foster animals may not be placed into a home with other unaltered animals.

Prepare your Household

Fostering is a big commitment, and it can be disruptive to daily activities and schedules. Make sure you have the support of all individuals living in your home prior to fostering. For everyone's safety, share any important restrictions or protocols with the entire household. If you rent, inform and receive consent from your landlord before committing to fostering.

Learn About Pet Care

Ask lots of questions about feeding, grooming safely, and activity needs for the animal you will be taking. Inform yourself of symptoms that indicate the pet may need veterinary attention and familiarize yourself with the location of your nearest emergency veterinarian. When you select the type of animals you'd like to help through foster, please be aware that after-hour medical emergency fees are the sole responsibility of the foster.

Determine Your Financial Commitment

Although MCACC provides the required food for your foster, you'll likely want to provide additional supplies. Our Clinic team provides mandated and some discretionary medical care, but if an emergency arises when our Clinic is not open, you must be prepared to take your foster pet to a veterinarian at your own expense.

Recognize Your Limits

Fostering a shelter pet requires a great deal of time and can be both emotionally and physically taxing. Some animals require more care than others and may be less adaptable to your situation. Determine your availability and limitations and stay true to those. Any help is greatly appreciated, but we also want this to be as rewarding an experience as possible for all fosters so that you can continue your support.



Choosing a Foster

Foster animal availability changes daily. Some animals need a more urgent outlet than others. We want you to be able to help shelter animals in the most efficient way possible, so we have developed the following process to get to know your foster interests. Once you have been matched with potential foster candidate(s), your Outreach team member will provide:

1. A foster vaccine tracking sheet (as applicable),
2. The shelter animal(s)' kennel card,
3. Any known medical or behavior history,
4. An adoption packet to complete an adoption,
5. And appropriate food for your foster

Other Dog Fostering Opportunities

Most dog fostering opportunities are for large dogs, weighing more than 30 pounds. Regardless, we encourage the entire family to come down and meet foster dog candidates at the shelter before you bring any into your home. If it's not an ideal match, we'll add you to our Waiting List.

Cat Fostering Opportunities

Most of our cat foster opportunities are young, orphaned kittens and moms with litters. Cats truly show their best, most authentic characteristics in a non-shelter environment. If you are interested in fostering cats and finding them their forever homes, please join our Waiting List to let us know when you will be available and which opportunities interest you.

As a reminder, for the safety of all people and animals, all foster animals must be quarantined away from owned pets for a minimum of 10 days.

Bringing Your Foster Pet Home

Bringing a new foster pet home is an exciting and maybe also an anxious experience. Below are some great pointers to help ease everyone into this transition safely.

Quarantine the Foster Pet

Animal shelters are like hospitals; pathogens can sometimes come home with your new foster animal. When you bring a new foster home, they need to be completely separated from all of your personal pets for at least the first 10 days. This separation includes any animal introductions and supervised play time. Not only does this 10-day quarantine keep your own pets healthier, but it allows your foster animal to become familiar with your routine without the added stress of animal interactions.

Avoid Off-Leash Areas

Most of our foster animals are dogs. MCACC animals may not be taken to dog parks, dog day cares, boarding facilities, or other off-leash areas. Many of our dogs have unknown histories and are being placed in unfamiliar environments. When walking your foster dog, be sure the animal is safely secured on leash. Your Outreach team member will provide you with a temporary leash. We recommend you prepare for this type of foster opportunity by purchasing a sturdy leash/collar or leash/harness combo. A secure harness or collar is always required to be on your foster animal, including in your home.

Zero Sleep-Overs

Foster animals may not stay with anyone that is not an approved MCACC foster. This includes overnight stays at a potential adopter's home or stays at a training or boarding facility. While in foster with you, the animal must be in your care, and in Arizona at all times. MCACC has a 30-day return policy for all adopted dogs and cats if an adopting family determines they are not a good match for the animal.



Give Your Foster Time to Decompress

Providing an opportunity for your new foster to slowly acclimate to their new home and destress from being sheltered is critical. Decompression can take days to weeks and depends on the animal and its environment. Be patient during this process, do not immediately make plans for the animal, give it the time it needs to simply relax.

Avoid any outings, including long walks and hikes, for at least the first 48 hours a foster dog is in your home. Limit visitors and noise, too. Only allow essential activities like

prospective adopter meet-and-greets for the first 10 days and avoid any activities that might overstimulate your foster animal (i.e. tug games, running, playing with other pets, etc.). Engage your foster in mentally stimulating activities, but limit training to only essential, safety-related commands. Depending on the animal's notes, discuss animal introductions with your Outreach team member prior to conducting these activities.

The first 24 hours a new foster animal is in your home can be the most challenging. Provide them with their own space away from all other animals and away from the busiest parts of the home. Ensure the foster animal always has access to this space and an opportunity to remove themselves from stressful or uncomfortable situations.

Check-In with MCACC

MCACC's Outreach team members will reach out to you periodically for updates. Be sure to respond timely and include any new behaviors or details you have learned since the last update. If your foster is adoptable, they will be listed on our adoptable pets' web page and any updates you provide will increase their chances of being adopted. If MCACC does not receive an update or response from you after 3 months, MCACC has a process to close records in our database and you will no longer be allowed to foster for MCACC.

Marketing Your Foster Animal for Adoption

The majority of our awesome foster families typically have great success in adopting out their foster animals before they are due to return to the shelter. When this happens, we can get even more deserving foster-eligible animals into the foster home they're waiting for and reduces the number of animals required to wait at the shelter for adoption. A successful and efficient foster program is a huge win for all shelter animals. Here are some marketing tips for the out-of-shelter adoption process.

Reaching Out to Adopters

Adoptable foster animals will be listed on our adoptable pets' webpage with a listed location of "FOSTER." Individuals interested in adopting a pet in foster care will reach out via email or phone to the MCACC Outreach team with their name and contact information. We'll then email you their contact information to share more details on the animal and set-up a time to meet.

You must reach out to potential adopters within 24 hours of receiving their contact information. Quick responses best ensure a potential adopter's interest and increase your chances of getting your foster adopted. The sooner they get to meet your foster, the more likely they will be to adopt (assuming is a good match). If there is a period of time where you feel you may not be able to the 24-hour contact requirement, proactively share this vital information with your Outreach team member. Failure to do so may restrict your future foster activity with MCACC.

Get Your Foster in the Community

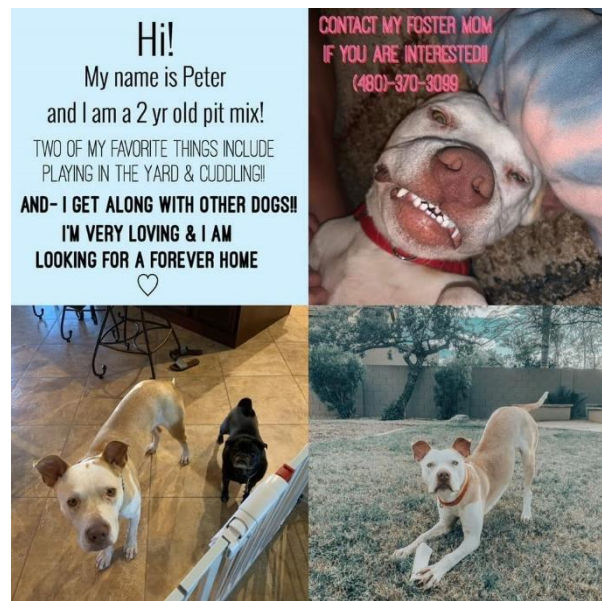
Take adoptable adult foster dogs out on a walk, hike, or to a dog-friendly business. Let people know your dog is adoptable by using an "Adopt Me" bandana, harness, leash cover, or other identifiers. Be sure to always bring the foster dog's paperwork so you can answer any questions about the dog's history and be safe while out. Make sure your dog has a properly fitted harness or collar, do not use retractable leashes, and watch how your dog interacts with the public. If your foster seems uncomfortable or gets anxious, remove them calmly into an environment that better suits their needs. **Remember:** Foster dogs may **not** go to any off-leash areas including dog parks.

If you have an interest in participating as an Adoption Counselor in collaborative in-store adoption events with local retail partners, please let us know. We have expanded these opportunities to many locations. You can choose to bring your own Day Foster or Overnight Foster or provide adoption counseling support for other foster animals from the MCACC Foster Program.

Take Lots of Photos and Video

Photos and short videos (less than a minute in length) are the best virtual way for potential adopters to connect with fosters. The most successful images of adoptable animals are those that really draw people in, make them laugh or smile, and show the animal's true personality. Some tips for great photos and videos:

- Feature the silly sides of your foster and be sure to highlight his/her favorite activities, toy, and treats.
- Photos with bright, natural lighting and happy, smiling faces are most likely to catch the eye of the potential adopter.
- Use a toy or treat held above the camera to get their attention focused on the lens.
- Film short videos and take photos horizontally (landscape) to make it easier to view on a variety of devices.
- Play around with all the fun settings and filters on your camera or smartphone apps.



Write a Bio

You don't have to be a master at creative writing to market your foster animal. When writing your foster's biography, focus on great characteristics and factual observations. You'll have time to talk about challenges your foster may have once a potential adopter has reached out for more information. More tips for a fantastic bio:

- Mention qualities that make your foster unique (e.g. loves to drink from the hose, carries blanket around, falls asleep in laps, etc.) or share stories about the activities they love.
- Be honest! While it's important to focus on the positives, do not use misleading interpretations of an animal's behavior. This does not set the animal or adopters up for success.
- Avoid negative disclaimers, like "Must be only dog/pet" with stop signs and other inflammatory messaging or symbols. Use positive wording and imagery (paw prints, etc.) and turn those negative phrases into more positive, inclusive statements "shelter noted dog may prefer to live as only pet in home" or "incremental pet introductions are best".

Share Your Insight

Once you get a bio and some great stories about your foster, the next step is to share them! First, send any updated notes and photos, especially relating to behavior, to the Outreach team so that we can update the animal's electronic record and share on the MCACC official social media platforms. Then share the information on your personal social networks, too! When posting on social media platforms, consider making the posts public so they can reach more people. Put together a cute flyer and ask local stores with community boards to post your flyer or feature your foster animal.

The Foster Adoption Process

To help you succeed in offsite adoptions, you will be given a copy of the MCACC Adoption Contract when you pick up your foster. Once you have found a new home for the dog or cat, you must return the completed form and applicable adoption fees to the Outreach team or directly to the Business Office team within 48 hours.

MCACC animals may only be adopted if they are already spayed/neutered, microchipped, and vaccinated for rabies (as age appropriate). Unsterilized animals and/or unvaccinated animals must be brought back to MCACC for these procedures prior to being physically transferred to an adopter. And always remember to provide the free start bag of Hill's Science Diet to adopters.

Adoption Fees

Your paperwork will include the adoption fee for your foster animal, if applicable, when you pick them up at the shelter. You may not set or charge a different fee from that which is set by MCACC. All shelter adoption promotions are applicable to foster animals as well, meaning that your foster's adoption fee may change several times during their stay in your home. Clarify the adoption fee with your Outreach team member prior to communicating the fee and/or completing adoption paperwork with potential adopters.

Payment Options

Adopters must be at least 18 years old. If processing the adoption off the shelter property, adopters typically have the option of remitting the animal's adoption fee in cash or check. Some offsite events may also include the ability for adopters to pay via debit or credit card. If the adopter is using a check, they must make it out to Maricopa County Animal Care & Control and they must write their Driver's License ID number on the check or MCACC will not be able to process the payment. If you would like to support foster events, please just let us know and we'll provide you with additional training to set you and your fosters (ad the adopters!) up for success.

Frequently Asked Questions

These are just a few of the key questions asked about our Foster Program. Please visit our website for additional resources.

Q: What is the fastest way to get non-emergency support?

A: We are generally available by email: ACCAltPlacement@maricopa.gov and phone (602-372-1158) from 7:30am – 5:00pm. After-hour inquiries will be answered the following day.

Q: Which pets am I allowed to Foster?

A: MCACC has a regularly updated list of eligible foster animals that you'll be able to select candidates from once you're an approved MCACC foster. Remember, dogs with Upper Respiratory Infections are not allowed to go on Day Foster trips but are eligible for in-home foster.

Q: Can an MCACC foster dog go to dog parks, off-leash areas, or walk without being leashed?

A: No, for the safety of everyone involved, our foster dogs must always remain secure and on leash while out.

Q: Are foster dogs allowed to do trial stays with new families? Overnight trips, a day at the park, etc.?

A: No, your foster dog must remain in your care at all times. You absolutely can meet with foster families at their homes, parks, or other spaces to spend time getting to know your foster. However, you may not leave the foster animal unattended with anyone who is not an approved MCACC foster.

Q: Can my MCACC foster dog be adopted while I am out with them or while they are at my house?

A: Absolutely, in fact, this is a best practice! We will send you with their medical records and an adoption contract. If someone falls in love with them during your outing, you will complete the adoption contract, collect the adoption fee (which will be communicated to you at time of pick-up), and (if they are sterilized and vaccinated) give them the dog along with all of the important paperwork. Adoption contracts and fees must be returned within 48 hours of the completion of the adoption. We will process the paperwork and mail the new adopters their version of the contract, license tags, and any other information they need for their new family member.

Q: If I have animals, can I foster dogs?

A: Yes! However foster animals must remain quarantined for at least 10 days prior to meeting other animals. Keep in mind that it's always a health risk to expose your pet to other animals whether it's walking at parks, vet waiting rooms, or other common animal areas. The health risk is minimized if your animals have current vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet, and are not elderly or very young.

Q: Will my foster dog be healthy when I get them?

A: We cannot guarantee the health of the shelter animals we place into foster. We recommend that foster dogs and personal pets are kept separate for 10 days to reduce the spread of any illnesses your foster dog may have contracted while at the shelter. If you have medical concerns about your foster dog, email ACCFoster@maricopa.gov.



Q: Will my foster dog be a “normal dog” when I bring them home?

A: When you first bring a dog home from the shelter, they need time to adjust and settle into your household. This “decompression phase” usually lasts about 24-48 hours but may be longer – remember it may take some time for them to feel comfortable in your home. Calm walks, puzzle toys, and soft music may help your foster animal decompress from the shelter. We recommended that you limit introductions to new people and animals for as much time the animal needs to fully decompress.

Q: What supplies will I need to foster an animal?

A: You will need basic items such as food and water dishes, toys and bedding. For dogs, a leash, and a snug collar. For cats, a litter box. Many foster families have also found it very helpful to have durable toys, like Kong toys and puzzle toys, a crate, a bed, and treats available for their fosters. We may have some items that are available for our fosters, so reach out to us to see if we can help. Since MCACC gratefully contracts with Hill’s Science Diet, we will supply the required food for your foster animal(s).

Q: Can I show up at the shelter to take a dog for the day?

A: While we greatly appreciate and encourage appointments, we will also try to best accommodate your schedule to help get more deserving foster animals out of the shelter environment. For Day Fostering, please use the [Day Foster Sign-up Link](#) to schedule yourself for a Day Foster opportunity. To make an appointment for all other foster opportunities, email us at ACCFoster@maricopa.gov or call 602-372-1158.

Q: How often should I feed my foster dog?

A: All MCACC shelter animals are fed Science Diet foods in accordance with label guidelines unless otherwise dictated by our Clinic veterinarians. We will provide food and feeding instructions.